



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

National Marine Fisheries Service, Southeast Regional Office, 263 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, St. Petersburg, Florida 33701

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April 13, 2012

FB12-028

## NOAA Seeks Comments - Proposed Rule Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper: Increased Quota and Recreational Season

NOAA Fisheries Service is seeking comments on a proposed rule for **Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper**.

The rule, if implemented, would set the 2012 and 2013 quotas for commercial and recreational red snapper harvest. The quotas can be increased because recent population assessments show that overfishing has ended. The red snapper allowable catch would be increased from **7.185** million pounds whole weight in 2011 to the following:

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
Overall Quota	8.080	8.690
Commercial Allocation (51%)	4.121	4.432
Recreational Allocation (49%)	3.959	4.258

If the 2012 overall quota is exceeded, the 2013 quota increase would require further scientific review and potential modification by the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council.

In addition, if implemented, the rule would eliminate the fixed recreational red snapper closed season of October 1 – December 31. By eliminating the October 1 fishing season closure date, NOAA Fisheries Service would be able to re-open the recreational harvest for red snapper if any remaining quota is available, without the delay of additional rulemaking.

### Recreational Season

The recreational fishing season opens June 1, 2012. If these new quotas are implemented, the recreational season would be 40 days and would close on July 10, 2012.

Recreational landings exceeded the 2011 quota by 730,000 pounds. These landings also exceed the 2012 newly proposed quota, therefore, NOAA Fisheries

Service has projected the 40 day season to prevent landings from going over the 2012 quota.

The population of red snapper is growing and the fish are getting bigger, so more large fish are being caught more quickly, which fills the recreational quota faster.

Without the proposed quota increases for 2012, the 2011 recreational quotas would remain in effect, and the 2012 recreational season would be even less days than are projected.

A copy of the 2012 Recreational Red Snapper Quota Closure Analysis is available online at: <http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov/sf/GrouperSnapperandReefFish.htm>

NOAA Fisheries Service will announce a final decision on the recreational and commercial quota increases and the recreational fishing season after reviewing all public comments from this proposed rule. The agency will issue a Fishery Bulletin and will post the bulletin on the Southeast Regional Office's Web site: [www.sero.noaa.gov](http://www.sero.noaa.gov) in May.

### Request for Comments

The proposed rule published in the *Federal Register* on April 12, 2012. Written comments on this proposed rule must be received **no later than April 27, 2012**, to be considered by NOAA Fisheries Service. All comments received by NOAA Fisheries Service will be addressed in the final rule. Electronic copies of the proposed rule or the regulatory amendment may be obtained from the Federal e-Rulemaking Portal at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Web site at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov), and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management Council's Web site at [www.gulfcouncil.org](http://www.gulfcouncil.org).

### **How to Submit Comments**

You may submit comments by either of the following methods. Comments received through other means may not be considered.

**Electronic Submissions:** Federal e-Rulemaking Portal:  
[www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov)

- Enter the following docket number into the “Search” box: **NOAA-NMFS-2012-0024**.
- Select the appropriate title, and click “Submit a Comment.” This will display the comment webform.
- Attachments to electronic comments (up to 10 MB) will be accepted in Microsoft Word, Excel, WordPerfect, or Adobe PDF file formats only.

**Mail:** Cynthia Meyer, NOAA Fisheries Service,  
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Division, 263 13th Avenue South, St. Petersburg,  
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All comments will be part of the public record, and generally posted for public viewing to <http://www.regulations.gov> without change. All personal identifying information (for example, name, address, etc.) voluntarily submitted by the commenter, may be publicly accessible. Do not submit confidential business information or otherwise sensitive or protected information. Anonymous comments will be accepted.

This summary is not a substitute for the actual regulations. We encourage you to read the full text of the regulations, available at [www.sero.noaa.gov](http://www.sero.noaa.gov).